

Field Education in Schools for Social Work in B&H- Features, Development and Challenges

Summary

The main objective of this paper is to identify the elements of the contemporary approach to field education in the education of social work and to identify them in the field education of social work education programmes in BiH. The paper is divided into two parts. In the introductory part we have analyzed different definitions and general characteristics of field education in social work education, and with that related concepts of experiential learning and reflection. In the second part, we analyzed the elements of field education in education for social work in B&H at the three different schools: the Department of Social Work of the Faculty of Political Science- University of Sarajevo; Department of Social Work, Faculty of Philosophy- University of Tuzla; and the Social Work Study Program, Faculty of Political Science- University of Banja Luka. The analysis was conducted from two perspectives. The first one is through the identification of the basic features of the field education model in all three faculties, and in relation to the general elements of field education previously identified through the theoretical analysis. The required data were obtained by applying the interview method with representatives of the faculty staff who are responsible for the field education programs. In order to determine the direction and quality of development of the model of field education programs, they were analyzed according to these characteristics in relation to the school year 2011/12 on one side, and the eight years later - the school year 2019/20, on the other side. The second approach is based on a comparative analysis of the curriculum of the field subjects, in relation to the following elements: 1) goals and defined outcomes; and 2) educational process methods. The results indicate developmental step forward, in terms of increasing the number of hours and courses in which field education is organized, the continuous preparation of students before the field practice, and the organization of initial trainings for mentors. A handbook for field education and greater support and guidance for mentoring engagement, organising the educational methods for develop critical thinking with

students, their scientific attitude and openness to new perspectives, remain as the biggest challenges for the further development of field education in school for social work in B&H.

Key Words: *field education, education for social work, field practice, experiential learning, reflection, mentors, students*